

South America.

THE subject allotted to us for a few moments' study is South America. Found in our own hemisphere and south of our own continent, to which it is joined by the narrow isthmus of Panama, a continent forty-eight hundred miles long, over three thousand wide, occupying about one-eighth of the land surface of the globe, and inhabited by about thirty-seven millions of people.

To get any good from the study, we must first know a little about the country, the people, the work which has been done and what is now being done.

The great chain of the Andes, extending from the extreme north to the extreme south of the continent, contains some of the highest and most rugged of mountain-peaks, among them Chimborazo, so high that though its base is on the equator its summit is wreathed in eternal snow. Titicaca, the largest lake south of the St. Lawrence basin, is found in this range, and though situated so high, and almost alone, it has no visible outlet to the sea. But the glory of the continent is not alone in its mountains and lakes, for it possesses the most magnificent river-system in the world. In the far north is found the Orinoco, a river greater than the Ganges. In the east, rising among the high tablelands of Brazil, and fed by its several tributaries, the La Plata pours into the ocean a volume of water surpassing that of any other river in the world, except one, the Amazon. The Amazon has a course of over four thousand miles, and is navigable for over twenty-five hundred. This river with its affluents forms such a matchless network of waterways that it has been called the Mediterranean of South America.

South America is divided into fourteen great countries, and includes representatives of almost every race and language, from the degraded Fuegies of Cape Horn, who had drifted so far from the Old World traditions that when discovered they retained in their language no word for God; the Indians, scattered over the vast plains and through the luxuriant forests, to the higher civilized Anglo-Saxons and Latins found in the free Republics. The numerous negroes and quadroons inhabit the north and central states, while Chinese coolies and foreigners, drawn thither by tales of the fabled silver wealth of Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador, swarm the cities of the western seaboard. The Government is chiefly in the hands of the Spanish and Portuguese element, while the red men constitute the greater part of the population.

Discovered by a Portuguese, Pedro Cabral, A.D. 1500, South America has for nearly four hundred years been under the direct influence of the Pope. But what a contrast it presents when compared with the ever-prospering northern continent. In the latter every religion is tolerated, Catholicism among the others, but what a different form of Catholicism from that in force in the south. Here, as civilization has advanced and people have become more intellectual, the forms of Church government have changed to suit the advancement of the people, while in the south the cities are among the gayest and grossest in the world, the Church enormously wealthy and very much opposed to progress and liberty, and the priests, not being stimulated by rival religions, have allowed themselves to drift backward until they have become unable to preach the Gospel as God's free gift to man, and worse than that, some of them are fallen so low as to have become drunken, ignorant and extortionate. The Bible is a book forbidden to the people and they are left, as it were, in the dark, without

any means of finding the light. Oh! brothers and sisters, ought things so to be? The whole earth is the Lord's, and "Let all that hath life and breath sing to the Lord," is the cry of the Psalmist. Will not the voices of the millions of people, living and dying, on the neglected continent be missed from the song about the throne? Can one-eighth of the globe be left out of the reckoning of the coming of the kingdom of Christ? Surely not.

Forty-four years ago Allen Gardiner and his band of workers landed in Fuegia. Amid want, starvation and suffering, the noble men struggled on for nine months, their faith never wavering, then died off one by one until there was none left. But the life-seed had been sown. The tragic news stirred England. Men and means were sent to recommence the lone Fuegia Mission. The struggle again began. The first party sent out were massacred, still others followed. But these were not alone. The Moravians went to Dutch Guiana, knowing that no worse climate existed; they went to preach Jesus, but before they could preach they died. Several would arrive together; in a short time all would be gone. In the first fifty years there were more deaths than converts. Every soul saved cost a missionary's life. To-day in Dutch Guiana, they tell us, there is probably more blessing than in any other mission field. Two-thirds of the population of Paramaribo are converts while the four large Protestant churches are crowded every week and overflow meetings are held, the people being so anxious to hear that even the open windows are crammed with listeners. Indeed the Guianas can no longer be called a foreign mission field. Was not the result worth the cost? But that is only a very little corner of the vast continent. In our day we read much of Home and Foreign Missions, referring to the Northwest, China, Japan, and even Africa, but scarcely a word do we read of missions in South America. And of 265 missionary societies at work in the world, only sixteen are attempting anything in the neglected continent, and among the thirty-seven millions of people are only four hundred workers, including ordained and unordained men, missionaries' wives, men and women teachers and lady helpers.

At home in small villages we find one, two, three and even seven churches with ministers to each and among the people almost every one has heard of God, or could hear if they cared to. While in the south, on the other hand, large towns, cities and even some of the countries have, some none, others one, three, seven, etc., men or women ready to preach the news of which many have never heard. But how is the word received?

Mr. H. L. Ewing, once when going home on furlough, was asked by a native who had come to see him off, if there were no Christians in England. "Yes," answered Mr. Ewing, "hundreds of thousands." "Then," said the native sadly, "Why do they not come out here?" You have only to announce a meeting in any street in Buenos Ayres and people will crowd in till there is not standing room. But who is there to preach? And, friends, the same cry comes from almost every other city or country in the continent.

To the Indians of the Amazon the South American Missionary Society sent workers in 1872, A.D., first on an exploring visit and later on to settle on the Purus. Hunting through the forests, building palm-leaf villages, dwelling in floating-houses on their lakes, these simple-hearted people seemed to the missionary explorers like little children waiting to be led to their Father. That sphere was open with its waiting multitudes and for ten years